

- 601 15. Makumbu: Grandchild. The converse of *tuka* (13) and *tumbu* (14). Great grandchild is designated as *makumbu-vakaru* (second grandchild), etc. Step-relatives are designated by the term *vakathambethambe*, i.e., *tama-vakathambethambe* (step-father); *tchina-vakathambethambe* (step-mother).

- 184 Informants say that kinship terms in southern Lau, in the Exploring Isles, and the Moala group differ slightly. It is reported that the Tongan system of making no distinction between parallel and cross cousins of opposite sexes is found on Vanua Mbalavu.

BEHAVIOR BETWEEN RELATIVES

CROSS COUSINS

- 605 *Veivatchini* is a collective term for cross cousins of opposite sexes. All of a man's female cross cousins and all of a woman's male cross cousins are preferred mates designated by the term *watchi*. The term for spouse is also *watchi*. The Mbauan term, *ndavola*, is an alternate term for a cross cousin of the opposite sex. It is used in southern Lau to show respect.

- 605 A familiar relationship exists between *veivatchini*. There are no tabus
521 between them. They address one another by name and use the familiar second
522 person singular pronoun, *ko iko*. They talk freely with one another, which means that they joke with one another about sex, for practically all conversation between non-tabu members of opposite sexes and much of the conversation between non-tabu members of the same sex, centers around sex. Jokes usually consist of obscene remarks. Such remarks are tabu between relatives whose relationship involves avoidance.

- 605 There is no tabu on sexual intercourse between cross cousins, and, in
836 spite of the ideals of premarital chastity for girls and of strict monogamy,
837 there is considerable freedom between classificatory cross cousins both before and after marriage. In order to avoid gossip and marital jealousy, an affair with a cross cousin is kept secret. One does not often hear of sexual intercourse between relatives whose relationship involves avoidance.

- 593 Behavior patterns between a man and his wife do not differ greatly from
837 those between cross cousins of opposite sexes. However, occasionally when a man is angry he beats his wife, but he does not beat a female cross cousin who is not his wife. Excessive cruelty toward one's spouse is rare and is talked about in the village. The people of Tokalau talked about a man whom they said had injured his wife's back by beating her. If a man scolds or beats his wife repeatedly she will run to her father's house. Then the people will talk about the husband. If he wants her back he presents a whale's tooth or other property to her relatives. Domestic quarrels and separations are not common. The discovery of adultery on the part of one's spouse usually causes only temporary friction. Fidelity to one's spouse is not really expected.

88] his arms from the rafters of the house and the erection subsides. So far as is known, the period of confinement is not used for formal instruction in communal lore.

When the fathers and paternal uncles of the boys prepare a feast called *i mburua ni tevi* on the first day after circumcision, the village knows that an initiation is being held. The feast is presented to the circumciser outside his house and eaten there by him and by the boys' relatives—their fathers, paternal uncles, brothers, mothers, and sisters. A share of the feast is taken to the initiates.

[824
757] On the fourth day a large feast called the bathing (*i silisili*) is held. The initiates leave their house for the first time after the operation to return to the place where the operation was performed. They wet and remove the tapa bandages and bathe in the sea. Then they take a piece of green coconut midrib or a stick of yale vine (*tabu mbombo*), heat it in the fire, and gently rub the penis to reduce inflammation. The wounds are dressed with chewed hibiscus leaves or chewed yale and are again bandaged with tapa. The boys oil their bodies and wrap new white oiled tapa, provided by their mothers, around the waist twice, draw it over one shoulder and down to the opposite hip, where it is tied. Meanwhile a large feast has been prepared by the initiates' relatives. The feast and property such as tapa and mats, also provided by the relatives, are taken to the circumciser's house and presented to him. The food is distributed outside his house, where it is eaten by the whole village. The boys may leave their house after the fourth day, but they continue to sleep in it for a month or two.

Initiation rites for the son of a chief are more elaborate than those for other boys but do not differ essentially from them.

GIRLS' PUBERTY

There are no ceremonies in Lau to mark a girl's first menstruation. Formerly a feast, called *sili ki wai levu*, was held to mark a girl's first fishing at about the age of ten years.

88] Some girls at the age of ten or eleven begin to twist a lock of short hair
302 over one ear into twenty or more two-strand cords (*tombe*, pl. 3, A). These
● 836 are not cut until the *kotchi ni tombe* ceremony after her wedding night
or until it is proved that she is no longer a virgin. These "virgin locks" usually fall to the shoulder but occasionally almost reach the waist. Informants say that now these locks are not much more than a coiffure for unmarried girls without offspring. Only about 50 percent of the girls wear the *tombe*. It is said that the custom of wearing "virgin locks" has appeared recently in Lau. It probably came from Tonga where such locks are called *fangafanga* (Gifford, 9, p. 186).

858 enforced between brothers and sisters and parallel cousins of
864 opposite sex. Apparently many girls as well as boys masturbate,
and young mothers who are nursing babies—and hence
[838] forbidden sexual intercourse—occasionally do so also. Accord-
ing to the girls themselves, homosexual relationships among
girls are not rare. These relationships usually begin by imita-
tion of other girls before a girl's first menstruation. Practically
all married women on Kambara say they have had such
relationships before marriage, but afterwards they discontinued
them without difficulty.

882 From the age of eleven, however, girls are usually more or
[585] less guarded by their parents, for virginity at marriage is
prized. A girl's virginity is usually tested on her wedding
night by her husband's female relatives, and the next morning
the results of the test are made public. Fear of ridicule and
the anger of her husband's relatives when she marries prevent
some girls from accepting lovers before marriage, which
usually does not take place until a girl is at least eighteen years
old. Moreover, virgins are afraid of being deflorated. They
are not sure just how the act is accomplished although they
have witnessed sexual intercourse.

● 836 There is considerable difference in the degree of pre-marital
176 freedom found on the various islands in southern Lau. The
most powerful force acting against pre-marital freedom is the
virginity test. Although this custom is not observed at every
wedding in Lau it is the rule on conservative islands like
Fulanga, where standards of morality are relatively strict. The
Lauans, however, try to keep the custom secret from western
visitors because of fear of disapproval and ridicule. In general,
the native emphasis on chastity has tended to break down
in relation to the degree of Tongan and western influence.
Among the islands visited, the greatest freedom was found
on Mothe, which lies at the trade cross-roads for canoe traffic
in southern Lau, and which was formerly the point of depar-
ture of sailing canoes to Tonga.

Sunday is lovers' night on Kambara. Trysts are frequently 836 arranged secretly during the morning church services by means of covert signals across the aisle which separates the men from the women. Moonlight, which is very brilliant in Lau, [821] is naturally disliked by lovers. Occasionally late in the evening my house would suddenly become crowded with young people. It took me some time to discover that this influx of guests corresponded to the rising of the moon.

There is a popular tale for children about the moon. In 821 olden times the people of Ngau, an island in the Koro sea, 539 did not want the moon so they decided to kill it. Some old men went with clubs to wait for the moon at the top of a hill. One of them had a bald head, and when the moon shone on his head they mistook it for the moon and clubbed the man instead of the moon!

Lovers have secret methods of communication. If the 836 beloved is indoors at night, the lover will pass near the house and cough, laugh, break a branch, or talk as if someone were with him. Or he may enter her house when all is dark and make a noise like a rat. A man or a girl occasionally has a go-between (called *muaoli*), who may be of either sex. He [572] is chosen for his loyalty, but receives a small gift so that he will not tattle.

If a man is attracted to a girl he will secretly ask her to take 836 a walk (called *ngande*, a term which when used in this sense 839 means to take a walk in order to have sexual intercourse). If he is repeatedly repulsed he occasionally resorts to a socially condemned practise called *ndarandara*. He enters the house of his beloved at night and attempts to secure her favors by stealth. One night Sekala, a bachelor from Lomatchi who was so unattractive that no girl would accept him as a lover, entered a house in Tokalau where several girls were sleeping. He lay down beside one who had repulsed him, and she cried loudly: "*Ndarandara, ndarandara!*" Sekala jumped up and called the name of a boy who he thought slept in the same

- 836 house, because he hoped that people would believe he had
839 come to find the boy. He ran out of the house and escaped,
but not before he had been recognized. The next day the
story had spread all over the island and Sekala was the butt of
much ridicule.

832 If a girl wants a man, according to one informant, she talks
nicely to him, says a tabu word in fun, and asks him for
tobacco. Then she can see whether or not he likes her. If the
man does not care for the girl and she desires him, she tries to
arouse him by making lascivious movements or by approach-
ing him when he is asleep.

836 Lovers usually have intercourse at night under the palm
833 trees fringing the beach or in an empty house in the village.
If a house is already occupied they try to find another place,
perhaps the shadow of a canoe. Occasionally they meet during
the day in the bush. Married people have connection in the
sleeping house or in the bush.

539 GETTING MARRIED IN LAU

*Mbasu na waka me tou nggunuva,
Liri na kena wai mbulambula,
Wai sevu ma kere savuya,
Kena kambisa koto ma na utha.*

Break the kava root and let us drink here,
The water poured in is quite clear,
I can hear the sound of it again
Like the falling of the gentle rain.

Kava chant from Namuka.

584 FREQUENTLY a boy is betrothed at an early age to his cross
cousin, the preferred mate in Lau. Child betrothal is not so
common in Lau today as it was formerly, for there is a
growing tendency for young people to choose their mates
themselves. Child betrothal is arranged by the boy's father
any time before the child reaches the age of seven or eight,
when he is informed of the arrangement.